

The Oldershaw School



Consultation on the proposed closure of Sixth Form Provision and Changes to Admission Arrangements for Year 12 and 13 at Oldershaw School

Wednesday 18th October 2023

About us

The Oldershaw School is a single academy trust operating a mainstream secondary academy with a sixth form provision under a single URN. It serves the community of Wallasey on Wirral. It has provided education in the locality for more than 100 years through its predecessor forms. Trustees of the academy trust are committed to maintaining educational excellence and supporting the children and young people within the community in the best way that it can and through taking account of the changing educational landscape on Wirral.

What is being proposed

The Trustees are seeking views on the proposal to close the sixth form at Oldershaw School and to amend the admission arrangements for Year 12 and 13 to accommodate the removal of such places from September 2025. This will remove the provision of non-compulsory education from the school from 1 September 2025. There would be no provision to admit Year 11 students into Year 12 in academic year 2024-25. Current Year 12 students will be admitted into Year 13 in 2024-25 to complete their courses, the sixth form will then close 31 August 2025 and will not have any sixth form provision from September 2025.

Why are we pursuing this proposal?

This proposal is made in recognition of a changing educational landscape in Wallasey and surrounding Wirral areas which sees a number of small in school sixth forms with very low numbers and unable to compete with the excellent facilities and offer of Birkenhead Sixth Form College, Grammar School Sixth Forms and the vocational offer from Wirral Met College.

Department of Education part investment into the £1.6 million Birkenhead Sixth Form College development to build 6 new classrooms and 3 new study spaces will see the college capacity increase to 1500 students, along with the new building and high-quality facilities at Wirral Met College means specialised Post 16 provision is more attractive to many learners at these colleges which will attract even more students from the Oldershaw School.

Research shows that Sixth Forms with fewer than 200 students are seldom viable. The low numbers in our current Year 12 (45 + 20 SGI) and 13 (21+ 7 SGI) means the school has to

significantly subsidise the Sixth Form budget from its main school budget and it's felt by the Oldershaw School Trust Board and leadership Teams that these monies can be better invested in developing teaching and learning and facilities for mainstream 11 to 16 learners. This enables the school to have a clear focus on compulsory education to ensure that those pupils moving onto the next phase of their education have all the skills and academic opportunities that they need to achieve the best outcomes.

Most importantly, the changes proposed will benefit the students of Oldershaw School now and in the years to come. Because of the reducing numbers in the sixth form, we have only been able to offer a small range of post 16 options for our students wishing to stay here. Encouraging our students to access the increasingly diverse offer of other Post 16 providers on the Wirral will open up many more pathways for each of our students, be they academic, vocational or directly specialised work related.

It is our responsibility to ensure that we secure the right pathway forward for every one of our students entering Post 16 education. The closure of the sixth form will also allow the school to focus exclusively on 11 -16 education and be able to broaden curriculum provision for these students.

Next steps

The purpose of this letter is therefore to gain your views and comments on the proposal to close the sixth form provision at Oldershaw School and changing the admission arrangements, as part of the overall consultation prior to any decision being made. Letters of consultation will be sent to all local schools, parents/carers, local community, local authority and all other stakeholders.

The consultation period will run from Wednesday 18 October 2023 to Thursday 7th December 2023. After which we submit your responses along with a business case to the Department for Education who will make a decision on the proposed closure of the sixth form.

There will be a consultation evening at school where you will have the opportunity to share your views and discuss the proposals on Wednesday 8th November 2023 starting at 5.30pm to 7pm.

Any comments or suggestions on the proposal can be made by emailing: sixthformconsultation@oldershaw.wirral.sch.uk

Finally, I hope that you will be able to support us with this change. It is an important development, and it will help us to realise our ambition to create a remarkable school for our community to be proud of for the next 100 years.

Steve Fisher
Executive Headteacher

Sarah Murphy
Chair of Trust Board